



April 2, 2013

Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

RE: In the Matter of: Nomination for the Universal Service Administrative Company Board of Directors, CC Docket Nos. 97-21 and 96-45

The Montana Office of Rural Health and Area Health Education Center is pleased to support the National Rural Health Resource Center and National Rural Health Association nomination of Kipman Smith, Executive Director of the Health Information Exchange of Montana ("HIEM"), to serve on the board of directors of the Universal Service Administrative Company ("USAC") Board of Directors. Mr. Smith is well known in Montana for his leadership in healthcare and the deployment of broadband networks in rural Montana. We are pleased that he is being nominated to represent rural health care providers. His experience of over 25 years working in the health care industry in Montana and his success in deploying a broadband network funded by federal universal service funds in a remote, rural Montana region makes Mr. Smith exceptionally well qualified.

As Director of the MT AHEC/MORH, I first worked with Mr. Smith while he directed the rural Critical Access Hospital program for the Montana Hospital Association. He also has extensive experience with certified rural health clinics and federally funded Community Health Centers. I work with Mr. Smith on the Board of HealthShare Montana in his role as Director of the Health Information Exchange of Montana. Through his leadership with the HIEM he has focused on adoption of electronic health records, health information exchange and shared telehealth/telemedicine services. Mr. Smith has also provided leadership to the MT Telehealth Alliance, where he demonstrated his ability to work well with other organizations, many of whom have competitive relationships in telehealth. Our office is currently working with Mr. Smith to develop training programs for HIT professionals to serve rural critical access hospitals, RHCs and CHCs.

The MT AHEC/MORH believes it is important for the perspective of the relatively small, rural and frontier health providers to be heard at the national level. Mr. Smith's experience in Montana and his involvement with national rural health organizations would be very valuable to service on the USAC Board of Directors. MT AHEC/MORH believes Mr. Smith is uniquely qualified and capable to fulfill this role.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kristin Juliar
Director

Office of Rural Health

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